

*the* **cottage** *journal* *Winter* ISSUE

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*Cottage-Style Cabins in Wisconsin*



# Old Town Made New

A team of professionals and a dash of creative thinking brought this 1942 home well into the present.

A family in need of more space, a storied Virginia home due for an update, and strict guidelines for preserving neighborhood history created a perfect storm of a challenge that the staff at Marks-Woods Construction Services were more than happy to tackle. “[The homeowners] have a growing family and needed the space,” says co-owner and director of business development, Greg Marks. “And so, they reached out to Lyndl Joseph, who is a local architect.”





Noting the need to create flow from the existing portions of the home to the new addition, Danielle emphasizes the attention paid to creating a holistic feel in the renovation, adding the priorities of "making it feel very cozy and allowing it to function for the growing family."



With an architectural plan in place, the family turned to Marks-Woods to bring the conceptual vision into the real world. "Essentially, what they were looking to do was a three-level rear addition and complete home remodel," Greg says. In the Old Town district of Alexandria, Virginia, that required working within parameters set by the city's Board of Architectural Review—which called for a bit of creativity.

On the main floor, the existing galley kitchen and confined living and dining spaces were expanded, making the space livable and creating a more open layout that only enhances the palette of warm winter whites. "They had a plan, but they hadn't started looking at materials, which is sort of half the battle," says Greg. Fortunately, Marks-Woods's lead in-house designer, Danielle Steele, was up to the task, teaming up with designer Campbell Minister of Campbell Minister Design, who has a connection to the family.





“The design intent was to keep it very Old Town, so they had a bit of traditional taste, but they wanted to modernize it,” Danielle says, adding that they wanted to make things more practical and cozy. While the updated floor plan and airy palette speak to more modern sensibilities, classic touches like custom white cabinets from Braemar Cabinetry, plantation shutters, and period-appropriate casings are timeless details that keep the space grounded in the original spirit of the property.

“There are a lot of special features in the millwork and molding that are indicative of the time when this house was built,” Danielle says. On top of the base layer of hard materials she laid, Campbell wove a tapestry of cozy linen-colored furnishings and a collection of antique pieces that add inviting warmth and character—including the family’s Murano glass chandelier that was repurposed above the dining table.





The chandelier that now hangs over the dining table came to the home with the clients. "It's very in keeping with the style and age of the home," says Danielle.



To create a seamless transition from the existing areas to the additions—and to stay within historical requirements—the team matched the new windows to the old, but a bit of creativity was called for in areas like the exterior, where matching the existing brick would have been an impractical feat. "So, we brought in board-and-batten and some architectural features," says Greg of the rear of the home.

Leading out onto a flagstone patio complete with a fire pit for enjoying the cooler nights of the season, it's an elegant reflection of the interior. Inside and out, the renovation proved to be a thoughtful integration of past and present—one that perfectly suits a family looking to add one more layer to generations of history. □

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